CHALLENGE

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September 10, 2003 Volume 38 #17 Suggested Donation $.50 www.plp.org

FORTY YEARS AFTER THE 'DREAM':

CAPITALISM

STILL A RACIST NIGHTMARE

Forty years ago this week, more than 200,000 anti-racists converged on Washington, D.C., to hear Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Workers and youth came with their unions, churches and student organizations to build the fight against racism and for equality.

A new stage of the struggle was just beginning. A month after King's speech, four young girls were murdered by the Klan in the Birmingham church bombing. Nine months later, a multi-racial group of three civil rights workers investigating the burning of a black church in Mississippi were killed by the racists. Thousands of others were brutalized by police dogs and fire hoses. Millions were inspired to move into action. Mass struggle created mass heroism. No one was left untouched.

Forty years later, all workers need to revive the mass struggle to end racism and gain equality. But we can't achieve these goals under capitalism, which turns dreams into nightmares. The capitalist profit system is bound by the fiber of racism. Only communist revolution can end this racist system. And building an integrated, international, anti-racist movement is the key to making communist revolution.

The world is very different than it was in 1963. In many ways, racism is worse today. Over 2,000,000 people are imprisoned in the U.S., more than any other country in the world. Half are black men, most convicted of non-violent crimes. Nearly one of four young black men in the U.S. is in jail or on probation or parole. Almost every week brings a new shooting of black workers and youths by big-city cops.

The unemployment rate, at a 20-year peak, remains twice as high for black workers than it is for whites. Furthermore, it's increasing at twice the rate for black workers, with better-paying factory jobs taking the biggest hit. Social programs are under intensifying attack, especially since Clinton, "the first black President," abolished welfare. Millions have been forced into either prison labor or Workfare. The public schools keep failing one generation after the next.

The increase of immigrant workers has led to new forms of racist terror, from vigilante border patrols to mass round-ups and deportations under the guise of "fighting terrorism." U.S. bosses aim to rule the world through unending wars and a fascist police state at home. On the one hand, Bush uses Condoleeza Rice and Colin Powell to justify the latest imperialist attack on workers across the globe. On the other hand, black, Latin, and white working-class youth are used as

continued on page 2

Liberal Bosses' Hitler Youth Plan: 'Service and Sacrifice'

(The following is based on a discussion at a recent meeting of the PLP steering committee).

For several years, the liberal wing of the most murderous ruling class in history has been campaigning for "service and sacrifice." This effort is kicking into high gear just in time for the 2004 presidential election circus. Workers should expect the worst.

The liberal presidential candidates, and the think-tanks defining their agenda, are attacking the Bush White House on two fronts. First, they believe Bush squandered an opportunity to take proper advantage of the 9/11 terror attacks to turn U.S. society into a fascist police state. They despise his half-baked effort to build fascism on the cheap.

Second, they condemn Bush's underestimation of the need to entice or force large numbers of workers into the military. Ruling the world requires a much larger, more politically committed land army than the U.S. can presently field. The liberals complain that the present military can't even pacify Iraq. The bosses need to win millions of U.S. workers and others to decades of war but so far Bush is coming up short.

The arguments dividing Bush and his liberal critics turn on how best to meet the needs of U.S. imperialism. None represent the needs and interests of the international working class. They're all our class enemies, but the liberals represent a deadly trap, especially because they claim to be "on the workers' side" and use the AFL-CIO to push this idea.

The Brookings Institution is one of the liberals' most important strategy factories. They've released a book entitled "United We Serve: The National Service and the Future of Citizenship" which calls for suckering millions of young people into a form of pro-war, fascist "team spirit."

continued on page 2

INSIDE:

Black Out All The Bosses, pp. 2, 6

Mid-East: Bush Snatches Defeat From Jaws of 'Victory' page 7

EDITORIAL: Liberal Hitler Youth Plan

continued from front page

The authors and editors make clear the connection between "homeland security" and future imperialist wars.

One asks: "Would Pearl Harbor have been a defining event if it had not been followed by national mobilization and four years of war that altered the lives of soldiers and civilians alike?" Then President Roosevelt used the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to mobilize 14 million U.S. workers and youth into the military for World War II combat duty and tens of millions of men and women into the factories for armament production, for a war the bosses had planned all along.

Bush flunked a similar test: "In the immediate wake of September 11, the administration's failure to call for any real sacrifice from citizens fortified my belief that the terrorist attack would be *the functional equivalent of Pearl Harbor without World War II, intensifying insecurity without altering civic behavior."* (Walter Galston, Maryland University professor and Clinton's deputy assistant for domestic policy; italics ours.)

Most of the leading Democratic 2004 Presidential candidates and a number of important Republicans are jumping on the United We Serve bandwagon. This is not a purely partisan squabble. Arizona Republican John McCain, the Vietnam War "hero" criminal, has nothing but contempt for the "business-as-usual" attitude espoused by many Republicans after 9/11. Rudolph Giuliani, NYC's mayor then, urged people to express their patriotism by coming to New York and taking in a Broadway show or going to a restaurant. McCain emphasizes that ruling the world requires more mental toughness than it takes to go on a tourist binge: "We failed many Americans when they said, 'What can I do to fight this threat…?' and we told them…they should take a trip or go shopping. I don't think that was the right response." (From July 30 press conference to promote United We Serve). McCain wants to offer $15,000 in college tuition to anyone who signs up for 15 months in the military: "If it's anything we're short of today…it's soldiers…it's security."

Michael O'Hanlon, a Brookings bigwig, warns that the only way U.S. imperialism can field enough troops to occupy Iraq through 2004 is to take "the unthinkable step of sending back...people who returned from there a year before." (L.A. Times, 8/12) He fears this will discourage reenlistment and predicts that in the short term, "the Army [will]…need to generate two to four fresh brigades for Iraq, and another couple in Korea." And this refers only to the current hotspots: Iraq, North Korea, Afghanistan and perhaps Liberia. What of Iran and what of the still far off but inevitable wars with China, Russia and other major imperialist powers?

The rulers are sitting on the horns of a dilemma. They have assembled the most destructive military machine in world history, and, within limits, can use it at will. But the more they use it, the more they need to replenish it and keep using it. This means men and women under arms, in the millions and eventually tens of millions. At the moment, the U.S. working class is far from being politically committed and the Bush team seems at a loss to win them. The liberals have identified the problem and defined their goals but so far haven't managed to inspire too many people.

Another terrorist attack on U.S. soil, whenever it comes, will give the ruling class another chance to make up for Bush's 9/11 fiasco. Whether or not they succeed is another story. Bush and Giuliani didn't start a stampede to military recruiting stations. The potential for McCain, Kerry, Dean, et al. to do so, remains to be seen. One thing is certain: no red, white and blue version of the Hitler Youth can meet the needs of U.S. workers and youth.

The bosses can never succeed in fooling or winning over everyone. Exposing the hideous truth behind the mask of "service and sacrifice" and honing our taste for struggle can, over time, help expand these opportunities. All of that requires multiplying the circulation of CHALLENGE, organizing among the mases of workers, soldiers and youth (particularly among those who join the new "service" groups) to counter the fascist patriotic ideology of the bosses. A mass communist PLP is the only way to fight to end the horrors of a system based on endless wars for profits of a few bosses, mass racist/fascist terror, mayhem and extreme poverty for billions worldwide. Join and build the PLP!✪

To Our Readers

This is a three-week issue of CHALLENGE. Our next issue will go to press on September 10. CHALLENGE is having a fund-raising campaign. Contrary to the lying bosses' media, we report and analyze events from a communist-working class point of view. Any contribution helps. Make checks or Money Orders to CHALLENGE PERIODICALS and Mail to: PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11002, US ✪

CAPITALISM STILL RACIST NIGHTMARE

continued from front page

cannon fodder to secure the profits of Exxon Mobil, Chase and Citigroup, Halliburton, etc.

The demise of the old communist movement has left the international working class defenseless in the face of unprecedented capitalist poverty and misery. For example, during the heroic 1967 Detroit Rebellion against racism, the Chinese Communist Party announced to the world its support of black workers and youth fighting racism in the U.S. saying "It is right to rebel." In contrast, when workers rebelled against a racist police murder in Benton Harbor, Michigan last June, Jesse Jackson raced to the scene to declare, "Our fight is not with the police."

Jackson, Al Sharpton, and other lightweight mass "leaders" want to use our anti-racist anger to elect the Democrats. But the liberals can't solve our problems, and in fact are more dangerous. In the face of growing war, exploding police terror, mass deportations and a rising fascist state, they want us to remain too passive, too cynical, and too afraid to take matters into our own hands. They want to throw dust in our eyes to keep us dreaming.

That's the challenge for PLP members and others who want to build a mass, anti-racist, revolutionary communist movement. On our jobs, in our schools and unions, in our churches and community organizations, we must take on the racist bosses more aggressively. We must sound the alarm that war and fascism are all this system has to offer, and that every struggle, whether big or small, must build the revolutionary communist PLP.

We don't need to dream. We need to wake up.✪

AFTER BLACKOUT, LIBERAL CALLS FOR CENTRALIZED CONTROL

Blaming the states and individual utility companies for the recent blackout, New Mexico's Democratic governor Bill Richardson and former Clinton Energy Secretary said the federal government should dictate U.S. energy policy. He wrote in an op-ed piece in the New York Times (8/16), "[F]ederal and state governments need to set aside their differences and work together. Over the last decade...the tension between the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and state regulators has increased substantially.... States must recognize that the regulatory commission has an important role to play in ensuring the well-being of the grid and all electricity consumers."

The Northeast Blackout cost U.S rulers dearly. They can't afford the closing of 50 North American auto plants or the shutoff of 750,000 barrels per day in oil refining capacity or the multi-billion-dollar losses in commerce they suffered last week. The Feds gave Enron a death sentence for its role in California's outages in 2001, among its other sins. State boards and local utility companies may yet pay for the Blackout of 2003. In the 1930s, the Nazis ruthlessly punished wayward businesses and centralized control of German industry in preparation for world war. What Richardson proposes is in fact part of a fascist, wartime mobilization of a key U.S. industrial sector.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

CHALLENGE PERIODICALS
PO Box 808
BROOKLYN, NY 11202
www.plp.org
email:
cd188@juno.com
718 630 9440

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue $.50. Subscription: $15. Six months: $10. Send address changes to *CHALLENGE* Periodicals, GPO 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202. September 10, 2003 Volume 38, No.17

Under Capitalism 'Workers have as much security as a pig at a barbeque'

Hundreds applauded at our last factory meeting as our co-workers condemned layoffs and management's greed. But the plant manager warned, "You don't have an entitlement to a job."

We were furious. We average at least 25 years on the job — junior employees have all been laid off. Nonetheless, we knew he spoke the truth. How did it happen that after 25 years producing profits for the company, we can be dumped at a moment's notice?

Under capitalism, workers have as much security as a pig at a barbeque. Even so, these are particularly dangerous times. The coals are red hot and the bosses are ready to serve us for dinner.

Endless Barrels of Red Ink

The U.S. ruling-class plan to dominate the world through control of oil requires a bigger war budget. In January, the administration upped the Pentagon's budget 25%, and that didn't include the $70 billion cost of the Iraq war, nor the $4 billion/month for the occupation. Adding insult to injury, the Pentagon colluded with Boeing to hide the cost of a new fleet of aerial tankers. They set up an Enron-like "virtual company" to own the tankers so the $17 billion expenditure wouldn't appear on anybody's books. (Los Angeles Times, 5/24) Of course, we workers will foot the bill. Who knows what else the Pentagon is hiding?

Adding these costs to the Defense Department's "official" budget of $396 billion this fiscal year plus monies for homeland "security" produces a total approaching $561 billion, a 75% increase this year alone!

Half-a-trillion dollar war budgets are a political fact-of-life. No matter what the short-term economic outlook, these exploding war budgets will require escalating attacks on the working class, particularly among those in basic war industries. The Pentagon's Defense Science Board called for incentives to cut costs (i.e., jobs) and consolidate production facilities (i.e., sell and/or destroy whole plants). "We [must] incentivize [sic] defense companies to go after cost and restructure their operations," said Boeing chair Philip Odeen, (Aerospace Daily, 2/3/01) "Competitive outsourcing could be the answer." A $100 billion here, a $100 billion there — pretty soon, you're talking real money.

DON'T FIGHT FOR THE BOSSES' OIL PROFITS, FIGHT FOR WORKERS' POWER- "COMMUNISM!" P.L.P.
NO LUCHES POR LAS GANANCIAS PETROLERAS DE LOS PATRONES, LUCHA POR EL PODER DE LOS TRABAJADORES "EL COMUNISMO!" P.L.P.

Beware Of Bosses Bearing Gifts

The bosses are attacking health care, pensions, wages and jobs to sustain their imperialist empire. More importantly, they want to destroy our class-consciousness.

"Reform politics in a system desperate to maintain imperialist dominance always implies attacking other workers."

When workers challenged the plant manager's call for more productivity, he warned, "If you, like me, want to see your pension, we have to make the company succeed. We have to bring down costs." According to this capitalist logic, we should sacrifice the worker next to us on the offhand chance the company will let us live out our lives in something other than dire poverty.

If we accept this logic, today's stark reality means the bosses will continue beating up our class. Our union has accepted this path, supporting the company's demand for cuts in workers comp. and unemployment benefits, in the hope of getting a few jobs on the proposed 7E7 aircraft. (see Challenge, 7/9)

Reform politics in a system desperate to maintain imperialist dominance always implies attacking other workers.

On the other hand, this stark reality opens up opportunities for the revolutionary-minded. Many will see that the only sensible solution is to develop revolutionary, communist consciousness amid every struggle. Nothing less will serve our class brothers and sisters!✪

Inter-Imperialist Rivalry Drives Up Cost of Military Superiority

U.S. military expenditures will continue to escalate due, in part, to challenges from imperialist competitors. Russia is now the biggest arms exporter. China continues to modernize its armed forces. France's Defense Minister Alloit-Marie insists: "European industrialists must unite to resist [U.S. military superiority]." (La Monde, 6/14)

The $200 billion spent on super-secret spy satellite programs over the last four decades illustrates the enormous cost of maintaining military superiority. Despite this huge outlay, the U.S. government's spy satellite infrastructure is reaching the end of its useful life. Costly failures over the last two years have made the system particularly vulnerable. (U.S. News and World Report, 8/11) Boeing is considering abandoning the rocket business altogether, leaving Lockheed-Martin the sole U.S. company capable of launching spy satellite replacements. Meanwhile, China and Russia are developing increasingly sophisticated and inexpensive launch capabilities.

The European Union (EU) is building its own, more advanced satellite system, despite concerted attempts by the U.S. to sabotage it. In addition, the EU plans to roll the quasi-independent European Space Agency into the EU government apparatus, making military systems the agency's top priority. (Flight International, 7/8)

"Staying ahead of the Joneses" has become an increasingly expensive affair.✪

Preparing European Public Opinion for War (against the U.S.?)

Over half of Europeans believe the U.S. is a danger to world peace, according to a recent poll among 16,000 people in the European Union (EU), both current and future members.

Most believe the White House's "war on terror" is illegitimate and want the EU to strengthen its own defense and security measures, without relying on the U.S. Tens of millions of Europeans protested the U.S. war against Iraq; this poll reflects that mass feeling.

In France and Germany, EU powerhouses, youth from 15 to 25 fear the U.S. imperialists' "preventive war" policies will lead to another world war. Over 70% of Europeans believe the U.S. is a negative force in the struggle against poverty and for the environment. Most Europeans also don't trust NATO. The end result of this poll is that most Europeans want the EU to strengthen its military power to counter the U.S.

Since the implosion of the old Soviet Union, the imperialist alliance of Europe and the U.S. has deteriorated and is now shattering because of the war in Iraq. So the European imperialists are turning the "peace" movement into a pro-war movement against the U.S.

Peace and capitalism don't mix. The only way to fight all imperialist warmakers from Washington to Paris to Berlin is to fight the cause of war: capitalism.✪

HOT OFF THE PRESS

With articles about the War in Iraq, Racism Still Achilles Heel of U.S. Capitalism, The Fight Against Sexism, Religion: Tool of Bosses, Enemy of Workers, Dialectical Materialism and much more.

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Hi-tech Bubble Burst: 'My only dream is to get a job'

The hi-tech "American Dream" of the 1990s has turned into a 21st century nightmare for tens of thousands of workers whose salaries were relatively high. Here's a sample of how the "upwardly mobile" have gone way downhill:

• In early 2001 Craig Heier, 43, an engineer, was a telecommunications consultant at $150,000 a year, dreaming of early retirement. His wife, Karen, said, "We felt the sky was the limit. We though we'd be set for years." Now, after two layoffs, and job-hunting since last February, Heier laughs about retiring early. "My only dream right now," he says, "is to get a job."

• At age 25, Alex Valich was a senior art director at Bikini.com, making $90,000 a year. In late 2000 the company crashed, Valich was laid off, and by the following summer he landed a job as manager of a skateboard park at $27,000 a year.

• James Richter of Cumming, Ga., was making $94,000 a year at Nortel Networks. But his upward trend crashed, he was laid off and after six months of job-hunting got hired at barely half his previous salary and says he's "back to pre-college financially," saying, "Even though I've lost ground, I know people out there who have no ground at all any more." (All quotes from the Wall Street Journal, 8/13))

These are just a few of the thousands of high-paying hi-tech jobs that disappeared when the stock bubble burst and along with it, the salary bubble. This group of "skilled, well-educated" and only recently highly sought after workers are part of the "downwardly mobile" who have found they're worth a lot less now. They may never again reach their "pre-bubble" levels.

Of course, their plight is nothing compared to the bulk of the 2.7 million workers whose jobs have disappeared since the recession began in March 2001. This recession is supposed to be "officially" over, but it's the first "recovery" since World War II in which jobs continue to fall 20 months into the "rebound." The previous record was 13.

According to New York Times columnist Paul Krugman (8/15), labor market conditions are the worst in almost 20 years. Non-farm payrolls have been dropping at a rate of 50,000 jobs a month since the "recovery" began. But, he says, "Just to keep up with population growth, the U.S. needs to add about 110,000 jobs per month." This means the unemployed are increasing at a rate of 160,000 a month. If that's "recovery," what would a recession mean?

While the ruling class spends billions on war after war, and hands over even more billions to the richest 1% via tax cuts and war/occupation contracts, nearly 20 million unemployed are being killed by capitalism's built-in recession/depressions. A Congressional study of "the cost in human suffering of people being out of work," (New York Times, 10/31/76) concluded that when unemployment rose just 1.4% in 1970, it led directly to the deaths of over 30,000 workers in the following five years from stress-related ailments, suicide and homicide.

Dr. Harvey Brenner of Johns Hopkins Univ. testified before that Congressional Committee that, "The national rate of suicide in the U.S. can be viewed as an economic indicator," so close is the link between joblessness and workers' deaths.

So if a 1.4% rise in the unemployment rate equals 30,000 deaths, imagine the resulting deaths over the following five years after the unemployment rate climbs to the 15% it is now — that's the TRUE rate when adding in the millions not counted by the government who've given up looking for non-existent jobs, who work part time because they can't find full-time jobs, who are part of the two million in prison and who are on welfare because there are no jobs.

Now part of the "aristocracy of labor" has joined those blue collar workers whose standard of living has been downsized for the sake of profits for a few bosses. Capitalism needs mass unemployment and downsizing workers to survive. But workers don't need bosses. Our aim must be to unite the over-one hundred million still working with the 20 million unemployed to fight for a society where production serves the needs of all workers. That's called communism. ✪

JAILING THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

According to a study by the U.S. Dept. of Justice, there were 5.6 million adults who were either in prison or had served some time in federal and state prisons at the end of 2001. That's 2.7% of the 210 million adult population. Two-thirds of these prisoners were convicted of non-violent crimes, mostly drug-related, who would not be sentenced to prison in most industrialized countries. A huge number are unskilled and would probably add to the jobless figures were they not in jail. "The growing number of ex-prisoners means more people have difficulty finding jobs because they have felony convictions." (New York Post, 8/18)

UMASS Bosses and Cops Hold Ph.D in Racism

DORCHESTER, Mass. — "Can I get a few more of those?" "Great to see you doing this!" Black workers eagerly took our PLP leaflet, bought CHALLENGE, and welcomed our multi-racial contingent at their neighborhood courthouse as we protested the racist arrest of Tony Van der Meer, a black UMass-Boston professor of Africana studies. The professor was tackled, arrested and shackled by police after a face-off with a military recruiter, who told him and a student they "should be shot in the head [for their views]." At the time, they were promoting a two-minute moment of silence in remembrance of the assassination of Martin Luther King.

This arrest reflects the increasing racist, patriotic culture of U.S. imperialism and its main racist arms: the police and the military. To expand and maintain its profit empire, the U.S. ruling class is transforming — both economically and ideologically — the schools, factories, laws and society. Since 9/11, fascism is intensifying, spreading racist terror against Muslim, black and Latin workers. The Patriot Act extends police powers to spy and intimidate, helping the bosses further crush worker and student dissent.

Universities have always played a key role defending the ruling class and capitalism, which generates racism and imperialism. U.S. rulers use universities for military research, to train military officers and, most importantly, as recruiting grounds for soldiers. To win students to support war and racism, professors are urged to teach pro-American, pro-war, anti-working class ideas and policies. Since 9/11, professors like Van Der Meer, who oppose all this, are under attack. University police such as the UMass campus cops have been working with the FBI to investigate Middle Eastern professors. Furthermore, colleges must cooperate with the military to be eligible for federal funds.

Professors, students, and staff on every campus should unite against all aspects of universities' support of U.S. imperialism. The ruling class is trying to prevent development of an anti-imperialist, worker/student movement. They need students and young workers to fight and die in their wars for profit. We must not let our campuses be havens for war-makers!

We have raised this idea in meetings of Van der Meer's defense committee.

In organizing for his pre-trial hearing, some friends wanted to present his situation as an attack on free speech. They doubted workers could understand a more complex political analysis. But when building for the rally on the streets of Dorchester, they found the opposite was true. While not every worker agreed with us completely, none were confused by the explanation about rising racist police terror, developing fascism and imperialist war. These mostly black workers were open to struggle and ready to fight back.

Our rally preparation paid off. Of nearly 60 attending, PLP members and their growing base had a large multi-racial presence. One comrade gave a well-received speech linking the war in Iraq to the war on our campuses. Our chants increased the rally's militancy and our literature challenged fellow protestors and observers politically.

The charges against the professor remain. He faces up to five years in prison.

We'll continue our work in the defense committee and fight to bring a sharp political analysis of this struggle to the workers of Dorchester and the students and workers at UMass-Boston. What if thousands of workers came to his November trial? We are raising the importance of building a multi-racial, worker-student movement against military recruitment at UMass-Boston.

We must rely on the power of our class, the working class to end capitalism with communist revolution. It's the only way to train ourselves to run society in our interest, and wipe out racism, war and police terror forever.✪

Freedom Rides

continued from page 8

workers $2,400 less per year. (Wall Street Journal, 8/19) Racism hurts the entire working class.

Even if we win our demands, workers will still get the raw end of the deal. With Patriots Act I and II, we're guaranteed a future of terrorism against workers and students, especially immigrant workers. Workers have nothing in common with the bosses. We have everything in common with workers worldwide. The only way to guarantee the interests of the international working class is to smash all borders with communist revolution. We must immerse ourselves in this and other mass movements to create class consciousness and strengthen our ties to the working class so eventually millions of people will join PLP to destroy capitalism and its imperialist wars.✪

LA Summer Project Unites Students, Workers, GI's

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 19 — This year's Summer Project was very successful in helping PLP's youth understand the importance of revolutionary communist theory and practice. By bringing communist ideas to the working class, we learned that we need theory to guide our political action. We went out to garment, transit and hospital workers with CHALLENGE, discussing unemployment, health care and the war in Iraq, as well as exchanging ideas about the war with GI's.

Our weekly study group discussed PLP's Road to Revolution III, to analyze the strengths of the past communist movement and the weakness of not having enough confidence in the working class's ability to learn revolutionary communist ideas. We also discussed the need to build a mass communist party to lead workers, students and soldiers in the struggle against fascism and imperialism, and for communism.

In our regular CHALLENGE distributions among workers, our discussions revealed how angry and frustrated the working class is right now and why our Party can and needs to grow. Some transit workers, whose contract expires soon, responded to our leaflet and CHALLENGE with a clenched fist in support.

We also visited GI's to discuss the war in Iraq. At first we encountered some hostility, but as we continued our exchange of experiences with them, it became clear we agreed more than we disagreed. Once when we approached a group of soldiers, one of them reacted irritably, telling us he thought the war in Iraq was a good thing and that he was happy to be part of it. But when he finished, the entire group around him said they disagreed with him and were open to talking with us. At another location, many GI's eagerly took literature. One soldier said he had missed the birth of his child because he was deployed for a year in the first Gulf War. He was also angry about the cuts in veterans' benefits.

We are also teaching ESL classes to immigrant workers who want to learn English. This has been one of the Project's best experiences. Discussing revolutionary politics while seriously teaching English is helping us build a strong and necessary alliance between students and workers. We also participated in a rally organized by unions and churches for "immigrnt rights," where one of the speakers was liberal police chief Bratton, With racist "friends" like this, who needs enemies?

We organized a forum on fascism, studying how it develops from capitalism and how to fight it, concluding that fascism reflects capitalism in crisis. Therefore, uniting with certain sections of the ruling class that seem "less evil," such as the Democrats, is a mistake — they are part of the same capitalist ruling class that needs fascism to control workers. We decided we need to be in a united front at all times with angry workers, students and soldiers.

As the end of the summer project approaches, we must take advantage of the momentum we've gained and make long-term plans to continue this political work in our high schools, universities and workplaces. In this period, with war in Iraq, the development of fascism and cutbacks in vital public services, meeting this challenge is an urgent necessity.✪

LA Transit Worker-Rider Unity Can Fight Contract Cuts, Fare Hike

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 19 — The growing capitalist crisis and needs of the U.S. imperialist war machine is affecting all U.S. workers. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) is attacking transit workers' health insurance while planning fare increases for riders. The transit bosses want service attendants making $12-$15 an hour to pay $160 a month for health insurance. "A" mechanics would pay the same although they make nearly $24 an hour. The ATU (Amalgamated Transit Union) leaders offered membership payments of $80 monthly (up from $6). The company rejected this. In the last contract, they attacked our pension plan. Currently there's a 60-day no-strike injunction, expiring Oct. 12 — making a full year without a contract.

The bosses also want workers who must use buses to get to work, to pay higher fares, raising monthly passes by $10 for workers who earn the minimum wage! The union leaders want transit workers to ignore, or even support, this attack on workers and students who use mass transit.

MTA bosses claim if we accept these cuts now then "we won't have to deal with it year after year." The union leadership agrees. The president wrote, "We have to take the hit," and "When the stock market comes back, as it always does, things will be better."

But these are pro-capitalist bed-time stories. The history of capitalism is one of slumps, crashes and enormously expensive imperialist wars launched to prolong the life of their system. These crises always come at the expense of everything the working class has fought for. Yet many workers remain passive because they don't think our class can make revolutionary change.

Recently a group of workers had a long discussion about these problems. One asked, "Do you think a small group of us can do it?" This skilled worker was simultaneously expressing both his doubts and hopes. Using CHALLENGE to bring our revolutionary politics to more workers will show him and all of us how a small group can grow and affect the thoughts and actions of many more workers who have similar doubts and hopes.

UNION LEADERS POSE AS 'FIGHTERS'

The union president is calling on shop stewards to organize the membership for a strike, starting with informational picket lines during rush hours. The union leaders have a plan, but it's not in our interest and it doesn't include fighting fare hikes. We should be reaching out to bus riders and inviting them to the picket lines. It doesn't include the service attendants earning $12 to $15 an hour who are being attacked twice as hard by increased medical costs.

The union leaders want to win mechanics to a narrow, self-interest view. This follows the union urging mechanics to cross the drivers' picket lines during their 2000 strike (many mechanics joined the lines).

We have an opportunity to fight for unity between riders and ALL transit workers, and show that workers have the potential to fight for communism and run society in our own interests. We can mobilize workers to "test the limits" politically, fighting to unite workers and to wipe out this capitalist system based on profits for the few at the expense of workers, from LA to Iraq!✪

MAYNARD JACKSON ENSURED HIS PLACE BY BETRAYING HIS BASE

Maynard Jackson, Jr., Atlanta's first black mayor, died this summer. I knew him and his family personally from 1952 to 1996. He graduated Morehouse College in 1956, and became a lawyer partly for the AFSCME city workers union in Atlanta. He was a part of a group of young Turks, black and white, who were inspired by the Civil Rights Movement.

When Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968, Jackson decided to run for U.S. Senate against one of the country's most powerful racists, Herman Talmadge. I became one of his speechwriters. Even though Jackson received only 15% of the vote, he won in Atlanta. Then in 1973 he became the city's first black mayor, with the support of thousands of newly-registered black workers, organized by AFSCME and other grass roots supporters, financial backing from black professionals in the New South's middle class, and some of Atlanta's "Big Mules" (the big bourgeoisie).

But the Big Mules had billion-dollar plans for Atlanta: cutting social services to balance the city's budget; expansion of Atlanta to some of its closest suburbs; reconstruction of the existing airport into a major international hub; a major building program to reconstruct downtown Atlanta; and improving public transportation between the city's economic core and its all-white suburbs.

Under his [Jackson's] administration, the Atlanta school board decided to trade school-busing desegregation for "separate-but-equal" funding.

During Jackson's first year in office, AFSCME set out to negotiate a contract with their former attorney. The union had contributed big money and manpower to his campaign. Jackson would have to choose between the predominantly black sanitation workers, looking to recoup long-delayed pay hikes, and the Big Mules' plans to cut social services.

Jackson played the race card to turn public opinion against the workers and eventually smash their strike. He went on TV with Martin Luther King, Sr., and blamed the strike on the "white man" who controlled the union. This decision to use black nationalism to attack black workers exposed Jackson as a dedicated follower of capitalist dictatorship.

Under his administration, the Atlanta school board decided to trade school-busing desegregation for "separate-but-equal" funding. He disguised this by having the famous anti-Jim Crow black liberal and former president of Morehouse College, Dr. B. E. Mays, Jr., preside over the process.

Jackson's reign witnessed the rise in black unemployment and the elimination of black neighborhoods for urban renewal and gentrification, including the destruction of the last black community near downtown. Billions of dollars were sucked from social services to pay for grandiose building projects in downtown Atlanta.

In the early 1980's, Jackson covered up the racist nature of the Atlanta child murders. First he denied there was a serial killer targeting young black men and a few young black women. Many Atlanta residents, black and white, feared these were Klan killings, not simply some serial killer. There was also talk that white cops might also be involved, since racist police brutality continued under Jackson's administration.

As the murders continued, the potential for a black rebellion was imminent, particularly after a suspicious explosion at a community center. A mother of one of the victims led the opposition to his handling of the situation. To enable residents to let off steam, Jackson's agents endorsed a major demonstration against the murders organized by Atlanta University Center students, but all of us had to swear not to criticize the Jackson administration or mobilize the black working-class community for the march, since it might cause "trouble." Also, we could not march in the areas of the killings. The PLP-led International Committee Against Racism (INCAR) participated in this march. Eventually, the cops arrested and convicted a black man for the killings, based on dubious circumstantial evidence.

As the result of all this treachery, Jackson eventually became the most important black Democrat in the South, the first black director of the Democratic Party's Voter Institute, a major leader in the Democratic National Committee and the National Conference of Democratic Mayors.

There's a kind of tragedy in the way some in the class of '56 chose the capitalist road and became the oppressors we once hated. But such is the nature of liberalism. The best intentions will eventually turn into their opposite because they support the profit system. The bosses will never do anything, no matter how "just," which threatens their class dictatorship. The only real solution is communist revolution. And so I feel anguish at the memory of our old friendship and anger at Jackson's betrayal of the working class he was supposed to "serve."✪

LETTERS

"Your newspaper was very good and made me feel that maybe there is a chance for us some day. Here is some money for a subscription. I will read it every time. Thank you for taking our side."
—A Verizon worker

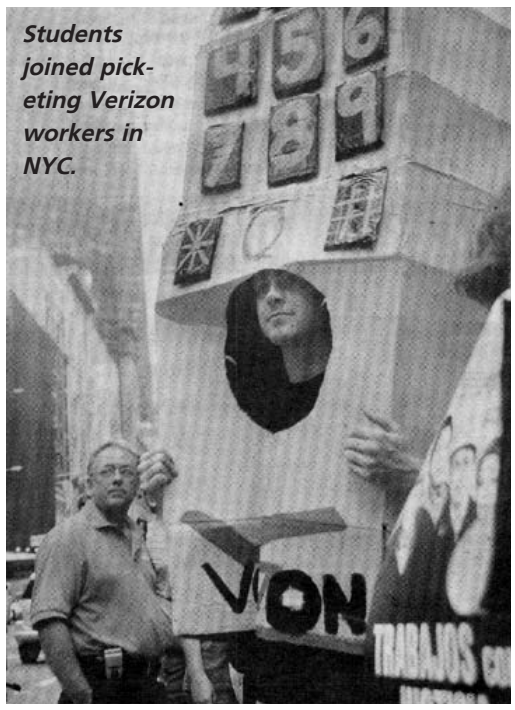
Verizon Worker: 'I Can Hear You Now'

I'm a Verizon employee and bought a CHALLENGE newspaper from one of your members while working in front of her house. I really liked it and thought you had the right idea about how the bosses make their profits from our sweat.

My company doesn't want to pay for our health care nor guarantee our job security. They want to work us 16 hours a day when they need us and then be free to lay us off when they don't. My union doesn't want to strike to force the company to guarantee us our jobs and health care. The union is more afraid of the company than the company is afraid of us. We're caught in the middle between the company bosses and the union bosses.

Your newspaper was very good and made me feel that maybe there is a chance for us some day. Here is some money for a subscription. I will read it every time. Thank you for taking our side.

A Verizon worker



Students joined picketing Verizon workers in NYC.

Black Out the Bosses

The Blackout of 2003 affecting 50 million people is my fourth major blackout in NYC (1965, 1977 and 1996, the latter affecting Upper Manhattan only). This time I was lucky enough to be home. While watching CNN's comments on Dubya's "gung-ho" speech to some Marines in San Diego, boasting about capturing a leader of an Indonesian group linked to Al Qaeda, suddenly the TV flickered and then went blank. I checked the fuses in my apartment when I heard a lot of noise from people in the street. "Terrorism" was the NYPD's first reaction as they put heavily-armed units into action. "Blame Canada" was the second reaction, but it turned out to be capitalist greed and inefficiency as usual.

Nothing worked, not even the cellular or electrically-powered cordless phones. I finally found an old-fashioned one, enabling one of my daughters to reach me. She was returning from the beach, stuck in a train far from home. She had to sleep at a friend's house. Without subway service to get home, two friends of my other daughter had to sleep over in my house.

Most people throughout the affected areas tried to help one another. This was the communist side of people, even if it meant making personal sacrifices, contrary to the greed of the utility bosses whose only concern is their immediate profits. The politicians, as usual, concentrated on covering their behinds by blaming someone else while lying through their teeth.

A few hours after the blackout began, NYC Mayor Bloomberg announced the subways would be running the next day and everything would be fine on Friday. But the subways didn't operate until Saturday and thousands didn't get electricity for 30 hours.

We must take advantage of the masses' cooperative spirit to build our movement, emphasizing that the bosses' "me-first" individualism is a loser. This is important, to counter the liberals running the main wing of U.S. capitalism who also understand the masses' collective nature and want to use it to build a "serve-the-nation" fascist mentality. Black out capitalism with communist power!

A survivor of still another blackout

Discussing Communist Ideas In The Classroom

This past spring I showed the new 27-minute PL May Day video (also on DVD) in four of my high school classes. It includes interviews, many of them with young people, and marchers expressing their feelings about communism, police brutality, racism, imperialism and revolution.

Afterwards students were enthusiastically bursting with opinions, questions, agreements and disagreements. It was exciting! Among all my teaching years, this classroom experience was one of the best, particularly because I think effective classroom work is not so much being a "teacher," but more so a "choreographer of learning." We should be engaging students to collectively help lead the learning process. In that sense, the May Day video was excellent, sparking vigorous debate.

To minimize a legal attack by the school administration, and until fascism becomes more full-blown, one should know that court decisions have created four criteria when dealing with controversial ideas in the classroom: 1) The content must be at the maturity level of the students; 2) The ideas must be relevant to the curriculum; 3) Both sides of the controversial issue must be included; and, 4) The teaching materials cannot be obscene.

On students' maturity level: a 1976 court case — Wilson v. Chancellor — decided a teacher was well within his [so-called] First Amendment rights to have invited a communist, among other political speakers, to a political science class at the high school level. The court said the school board could not justify the banning of a communist speaker "by contending that political subjects are inappropriate in a high school curriculum. Political subjects are frequently discussed at…schools throughout the country…"

On relevance: communist ideas are often highly appropriate, even in relation to the curricula established by capitalism. The major work of literature I was mandated to teach this past spring was published in the early 1950s, during the McCarthy period. The novel's theme was focused on attacking communism. There's really no way to understand the novel without some understanding of communism.

On presenting both sides of a controversial issue: I looked up Joseph McCarthy on the internet and found an abridged version of one of his anti-communist harangues which could fit on the front and back of one sheet. We read that and then watched the May Day video. Then we discussed and debated everything.

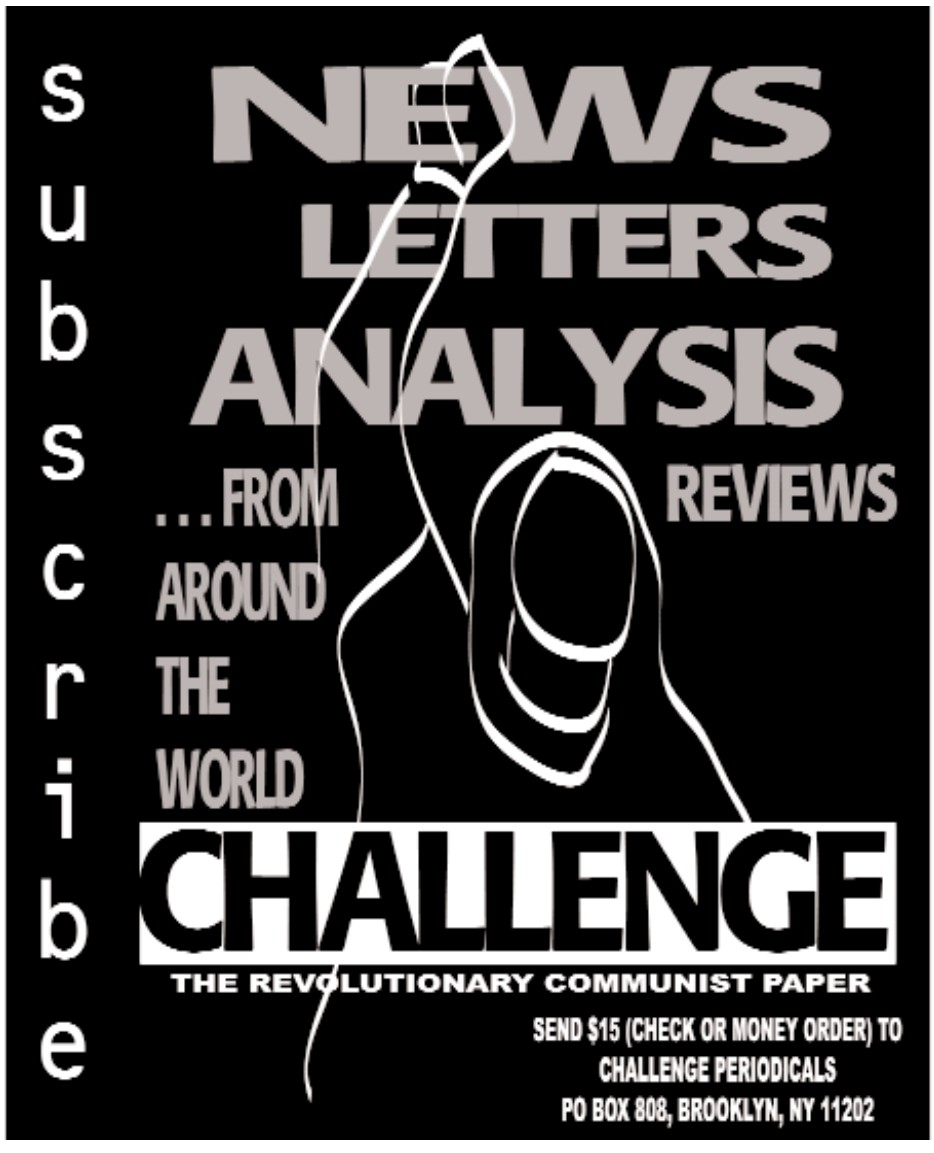
The video is not obscene, so that makes point four irrelevant.

The other main court decisions establishing the four points regarding the teaching of controversial ideas are: Keyishian v. Board of Regents, Albaum v. Carey, Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, Keefe v. Geanakos, Sterzing v. Fort Bend Independent School District, Thomas v. Board of Education, Bertot v. School District No. 1, Sindermann v. Perry, and Ramsey v. Hopkins.

Our youth need to understand as much as possible about communism, just as young folks in the past needed to know everything they could about how to successfully fight and defeat slavery. We should do everything we can to ensure that we don't become disseminators of the enemy's ideology or, simply participate passively in the nefarious function of capitalist schools, which mainly lays the basis for re-creating the same inequality and exploitative class structure in the next generation.

I strongly encourage all teachers to show and discuss the May Day video in their classes during the upcoming school year. Dare to struggle. Dare to win!

Red Teacher



Hotels Clean Up From Immigrant Labor

This will not be news to you or your readers but my travel experience recently is just another example of the vicious exploitation of workers. I stayed at a "major brand" hotel in Harrisburg, Pa., and saw the use of immigrant labor from poor countries as chambermaids, porters, waiters, barkeeps, etc.

Over three days on my floor with perhaps 100 rooms, only two "maids" were allotted to clean, remake and spread linen on the beds, and toilet-clean the rooms. Upon returning to the hotel from sightseeing each day at 5:00 P.M., these two workers would still be struggling to finish the burdensome cleaning. There are lots of details: bathtub, basin, fresh towels, making beds, replacing amenities (coffee, tea, etc.). This hotel chain is saving money by using only two employees on each floor. I tried to ask one if she was unionized but she was too frightened to talk.

So this is the bottom line our capitalist hotel chain follows: maximize the share-holders' profits (my nightly room rent was $138, and "discounted" at that) by over-working poor captive-labor immigrants who have no alternative to working for these vicious slave-drivers. If I were running that hotel, the floor-load

continued on next page

MORE LETTERS

would have probably been 25 workers.

I wrote my feelings to this hotel chain. In the future, I will boycott all hotels, staying only in private B&B's or guest houses. I hope all other sympathetic comrades will also boycott major hotel chains since they follow the same "slave-driver" principles.

NKS

Working Class Needs Communist Power

The blackout of '03 reveals that the most powerful imperialist country, with the greatest wealth, industry and military power in the world, cannot provide the basic necessities of life to its workers. As millions fought to survive, many in dark subway tunnels, trapped in elevators and high-rise buildings, the stock exchange conducted business as usual, with plenty of power, along with protection from cops toting machine guns.

Over the last 20 years, many have pointed to the critical need for more power generators to meet ever-rising demand but the electric utilities, like all capitalist corporations, answer only to the need for more profits. When denied rate increases, instead of building more generators they milked profits by cutting back on preventive maintenance and safety and getting their boss-controlled government to de-regulate and privatize their systems. This "allowed managers to…chase higher returns in businesses other than providing power…. [including] some…overseas operations." (NY Daily News, 8/16) All this resulted in the further neglect of their systems.

The utilities are locked together in a grid to share power when demand is higher in some areas. But for years demand has exceeded the capacity almost everywhere. The system is currently a disaster waiting to happen again and again. Whenever laws were passed preventing utility bosses' rate-gouging, they countered by letting their systems rot, knowing full well that their government will hike taxes and electric rates to pay for the building of new equipment, as will likely occur now.

So the blackout of '03 becomes another investment bonanza for the utilities at workers' expense and suffering. The bosses hold political, electrical and all other power and use it to reap huge profits, regardless of the cost to workers' lives. Workers everywhere must use this latest outrage against our class to step up the fight not only for electric power but for communist power which will serve all our needs and end the rotten profit system.

Retired comrade

Broken Worker? Get Another!

CHALLENGE has reported on unsafe conditions in many factories around the world. Here, too, the bosses treat us as nothing more than tools to use up and get rid of. They don't make working conditions safer for us. They expect us to perform hazardous job duties without proper equipment. If we refuse, they say: "If you don't want to do it, there's the gate."

Our union is not helping us fight for better working conditions either. The president is clearly in office to advance himself alone, not us workers.

Recently we had a coal-leak fire that went from the 5th to the 8th floors. A union steward told us to put the fire out at the source with wet towels! (Spraying it with the fire hose would have atomized the pulverized coal and exploded.) Instead of dropping load on the generating units in dangerous situations such as these so we can fight fires and deal with emergencies more safely, management aims to keep the unit on line at all costs, even if it cost workers' lives.

We stress to people that these are not "our" jobs, that the bosses use us in *their* jobs at their convenience, giving no thought to us or our families. The moment we're no longer valuable to them they'll try to dump us. If we get injured, their attitude is: "Broke one? Get another."

Now the bosses are trying to privatize our pension like Enron did to its employees. We can't trust the bosses or their misleaders in the union. They're the ones feeding off our labor and sweat. Our situation here in particular and in the world generally will only improve when we organize to destroy capitalism.

A Shop Comrade

While Iraq Erupts, Taliban (and drugs) Are Back in Afghanistan

The Bush administration, which swore to crush Al Qaeda, seems to have forgotten about that aspect of its "war on terror." The hunt for Saddam Hussein (or rather for the vast Iraqi oil fields) took precedent. As Time Magazine reported (8/4), "Bush hadn't mentioned Osama bin Laden's name in months, but he said recently that the U.S. was 'slowly but surely dismantling bin Laden's terrorist operation.' As the hunt for Saddam Hussein intensifies, some U.S. officials are suggesting that the focus on the former leader of Iraq has come at the cost of eliminating the eccentric Saudi millionaire behind the 9/11 attacks…. Last fall, as the U.S. began planning the invasion of Iraq, Washington shifted many of its highly classified special-forces units and officers who had been hunting bin Laden in Afghanistan, moving them to Iraq, where they performed covert operations before the war began. By December many of the 800 special-forces personnel who had been chasing Al Qaeda for a year were quietly brought back home, given a few weeks rest and then shipped out to Iraq."

Meanwhile, Al Qaeda (AQ) seems to have expanded its operations. Many of its holy warriors are now in Iraq, attacking U.S. and British soldiers. Groups linked to AQ are growing in Indonesia. And in Afghanistan itself, the U.S. puppet government of Karzai seems to control only the presidential palace in Kabul, heavily protected by CIA-hired mercenaries. Now NATO has replaced Germany as commander of the "peacekeeping" forces, basically operating in Kabul. Warlords control the rest of the country, most of them loyal to their pockets, some loyal to Iran and most waiting to see which way the wind is blowing. And it seems to be shifting towards the Taliban, which according to Stratfor.com (8/7): "…has now regained control of most of Zabul province in southern Afghanistan. This marks the first time that Taliban fighters — in concert with Al Qaeda forces — have retaken a province since being ousted from power by the U.S. military in Nov. 2001. It also underscores the stalemate between the U.S.-backed Afghan forces and the Taliban."

Zabul is of strategic and military importance because it cuts off U.S. forces stationed to the south in Kandahar from the bulk of U.S. and NATO forces located to the north towards Kabul. It also helps the Taliban to gain control of other provinces.

The U.S. might counter-attack, but the growing resistance movement in Iraq is tying up U.S. forces that could be used in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Pakistan (whose Intelligence Service is still influential with the Taliban, which it created in the early 1990s) will probably increasingly support the anti-U.S. forces to counter India which, along with Russia, is arming the 80,000-strong forces of Dostum, Afghanistan's Interior Minister, head of the former Northern Alliance and no friend of President Karzai.

The "war on terror" is going as badly as the "war on drugs." The Wall Street Journal (8/11) reported that the Russian general in charge of fighting drugs is blaming the U.S. for the growing heroin and opium trade in Russia and Europe. Most of it comes from areas controlled by pro-U.S. Afghan warlords. "Gen. Viktor Cherkessov said…that drug production in Afghanistan has increased 'catastrophically'….Over the past year, the U.S. hasn't curtailed production — a situation about which Russian officials…express outrage."

So "Top Guns" Bush and Rumsfeld have basically exposed the U.S. as a "stuporpower," although a dangerous one. They will kill tens of thousands of workers and youth worldwide — including young GIs used as cannon fodder — in the U.S. bosses' drive for world domination. A system based on endless wars for profits must be destroyed, not by reactionary "holy warriors" (many of them trained by the CIA and their now-distant allies in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia), but by revolutionary war to create a new society without any bosses: communism.✪

Mid-East: Bush Snatches Defeat From Jaws of 'Victory'

George "Bring 'em on" Bush and his Rumsfeld/Cheney/Wolfowitz gang promised that the fall of Saddam Hussein would be a big blow to terrorism and "stabilize" the entire Middle East. Since Bush's aircraft carrier show on May 1st declared the war "over," what hath Dubya wrought?

Resistance is growing daily in Iraq. Bush & Co. has turned the country into an expanding haven for al Qaeda-type terrorists, exactly what they said they were invading Iraq to eliminate.

The UN's Baghdad headquarters was just bombed and its chief killed, along with 16 others.

Riots are spreading in the north and south protesting lack of electricity and water.

Oil pipelines are being blown up.

GI's are dying daily; pretty soon more will have been killed "after" the war than during it. "Put 148,000 troops in 120-degree heat...with their water rationed, 6,000 miles from home, where they can be ambushed at any moment. Then cut their pay…. Oct. 1…soldiers will lose $75 a month…and their dependents will lose $150 in 'family separation allowances' [which] discourages enlistments and re-enlistments and fuels the 'bring them home' movement some military families have started." (Palm Beach Post, 8/19) For what? As private Mary Yahne wrote Seattle KIRO Channel 7 TV, "There is no real reason for us to be out here!!!! We're protecting the oil is all." (8/14)

Meanwhile, the highly-touted Bush/Blair Middle East "road map to peace" is full of potholes with daily clashes and bombings in the West Bank and in Jerusalem.

Now, Stratfor.com's intelligence analysis service says (8/7) that the Taliban is on the move in Afghanistan, having "regained control of most of Zabul province."(See adjoining article).

Finally, Stratfor reports (8/17) that in Saudi Arabia, world's largest producer of oil, "the Saudi monarchy is rapidly crumbling" and when the ailing King Fahd dies, "his death will lead to internal chaos." Stratfor says that this decline — unemployment is at 40% — is accompanied by the rise in strength of bin Laden's al Qaeda forces which has growing support inside the country and is "consolidating its ability to operate in the kingdom."

While Stratfor declines to predict the fall of the Saudi regime, it says, "Its decay is a sign of increasing turmoil in the Middle East and within the Muslim world in general. The collapse of the House of Saud will aggravate instability in the Middle East exponentially. The U.S., besides trying to deal with…al Qaeda, Iraq, Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, will have to address not only the problem of oil supply but also Saudi Arabia's political instability."

It doesn't seem as if Bush will be landing on any aircraft carriers in the near future.✪

A-Bomb Holocaust Shows U.S. Rulers Champs At WMD

Amid all the reports about Saddam Hussein's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), one should remember that the only rulers to ever use nuclear WMD were those of the U.S. In dropping two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the U.S. ruling class murdered a quarter-million Japanese civilians in a matter of seconds, injured hundreds of thousands more, and left future generations with everlasting genetic effects.

The rationale for this genocidal attack ordered by liberal Democratic President Harry Truman was to end the war without having to invade Japan and thereby "avoid one million casualties." Over the years that has been exposed as a falsehood topping even Hitler's Big Lies. (In fact, Stanford historian Barton Bernstein found that declassified military planning documents produced a worst-case invasion scenario of 46,000 deaths.) As will be shown below, (1) the Japanese fascists had already been defeated and were suing for peace prior to that August attack; (2) it was absolutely unnecessary militarily to drop the Bomb (much less two); and (3) rather than ending World War II, that atomic holocaust was actually the U.S. bosses' opening shot of the Cold War against the Soviet Union.

Now along comes New York Times liberal columnist Nicholas Kristoff quoting Japanese sources as claiming that that country's military was so committed to "fighting to the last man" that it was only the use of the Bomb that enabled Japan's "peace faction" to force a surrender without a land invasion of that island country. So Kristoff concludes that "the greatest tragedy of Hiroshima was not that so many people were incinerated in an instant, but that…the alternatives were worse." Were they?

By 1945, Japan's entire industrial and military machine had ground to a halt. That spring, its oil lifeline had been severed. On March 9, 1945, "100,000 to 200,000 men, women and children died…when the U.S. 20th Air Force doused Tokyo with jellied gasoline; all told, in the months before Hiroshima, bombs killed up to 500,000 in Japanese cities and left 13 million homeless." (U.S. News & World Report, 7/13/95) U.S. Air Force General Curtis LeMay complained that there was nothing left to bomb in Japan except "garbage can targets." Japan could no longer defend itself.

In early 1945, U.S. rulers knew Japan was trying to surrender. The chief historian of the U.S. Regulatory Commission, Samuel Walker, wrote that "the consensus was that the bomb was not needed to avoid an invasion of Japan….Alternatives to the bomb existed and…Truman and his advisers knew it."

On May 5, 1945, the U.S. intercepted and decoded a cable from the German ambassador in Japan, sent to Berlin, stating: "Since the situation is…hopeless, large sections of Japan's armed forces would [favor] an American request for capitulation even if the terms were hard." (NY Times, 8/11/93, p. 9)

A 1946 report by the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, after examining the intelligence information available to the White House in 1945, concluded that, "certainly prior to 31 December 1945…Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped…and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated."

Truman's own diary — released in 1979 — indicated he knew from decoded Japanese cables they were about to surrender unconditionally, requesting only that the monarchy be retained. Truman referred to the intercepted intelligence as the cable from the "Jap Emperor asking for peace." He wrote on July 17, 1945, that he believed the Soviets — as promised by Stalin at the May Potsdam Conference — would "be in the war by August 15. Fini Japs when that comes about." (It was a week earlier.)

Even General Dwight Eisenhower, later to succeed Truman as President, told Secy. of War Stimson at the time that, "Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary….whose employment…[was] no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives."

But the Truman Administration didn't want Japan to surrender before the Bomb could be used. On June 6, 1945, Stimson told Truman he was "fearful" that before the A-Bomb was dropped, Japan would have been so "bombed out" by the U.S. Air Force that the Bomb "would not have a fair background to show its strength." "Show its strength" to whom? Certainly not to Japan, already defeated and frantically trying to surrender.

The object of this "show of strength" becomes clear when learning that U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes told the atomic scientist Leo Szilard that the bomb's biggest "benefit" was not its effect on Japan but rather "rattling the bomb might make Russia more manageable."

U.S. rulers murdered over a quarter million Japanese civilians and tortured endless future generations with genetic defects solely as a warning to the Soviet Union, which didn't have the Bomb at that time. The dropping of the A-Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, rather than being the last act of World War II, was actually the first act in launching the Cold War against the Soviet Union.

Certainly it is the U.S. ruling class that is the master of Weapons of Mass Destruction.✪

Calif. Recall Chaos Hinders War Drive

An important political struggle is raging behind California's recall election circus. At stake is state power and the way the rulers will wield it in this period of intensifying fascism and war. As it attempts to mobilize the nation for ever deadlier wars, the dominant, liberal wing of U.S. capitalists needs tighter control over society. For them, it is crucial that California's internal politics not hinder their imperialist agenda. Since California produces one-seventh of the U.S.'s gross domestic product, much of it in war-related high-tech and aerospace industries, this is also a fight for control over this state's economy.

But forces outside the Establishment are using the recall mechanism against California's Democratic Gov. Gray Davis for their own ends. Darrell Issa, an independent electronics tycoon and now a Republican congressman, bankrolled the recall petition. Issa represents upstart capitalists who focus on their own short-term profits rather than on the long-term needs of U.S. imperialism. In Congress, for example, Issa is working to require that components for rebuilding Iraq's communications system come exclusively from U.S. companies, including his. Liberal U.S. rulers, meanwhile, desperately needing allied troops for the Iraqi occupation, are willing to toss bits of the reconstruction bonanza to foreign firms.

This more powerful group of U.S. capitalists opposes the recall effort. Warren Christopher, Clinton's first Secretary of State, heads a blue-ribbon team that seeks to block the recall, or, failing that, to elect a liberal. The group also includes California AFL-CIO chief Art Pulaski. Christopher is senior partner at O'Melveny & Myers, a law firm that counts such imperialist heavyweights as Exxon Mobil, JP Morgan Chase, and Lockheed Martin as its top clients. Christopher has also served as vice-chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, a Rockefeller-led policy factory that has been hounding George Bush to send more troops to Iraq and crack down on homeland security. Clinton himself has rallied to Davis's side and Democratic Governors are contributing to his campaign.

Taxes, California's $38 billion deficit, and Davis's handling of Enron's hijacking of the state's electricity in 2001 are the immediate issues here. (Davis also reneged on a previous campaign promise to pass a law granting drivers' licenses. Now he's promising it once again.) But a deeper concern is the shape of government itself. Like most smaller capitalists, Issa & Co. favor local rule. In a campaign statement, Issa complained, "Our federal government has grown dangerously large and powerful. It consumes an alarming portion of the national income, and has thrown the net of federal control over nearly every aspect of our lives….It is time to send power back to the people by returning the federal government to its constitutional boundaries and leaving it up to the people — acting through their state and local governments — to decide what level of government action or inaction best suits their needs."

But for over 40 years the main rulers have been contemplating consolidation. In 1960, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund issued a 465-page blueprint for U.S. society titled "Prospect for America." It questioned, "whether the present geographical boundaries between the states are anachronistic" and "whether the federal government needs more centralized power than it now has."

We can't foretell who will win the recall/election scheduled for October 7. But it's interesting how Establishment financier Warren Buffett seemed to torpedo Arnold Schwarzenegger's lead in the polls recently. Buffet became Arnold's economic adviser and immediately called for higher property taxes, a move that terminated the candidate's credibility among the Republican right. It is certain, however, that this fight, which stretches far beyond California, will not end with the vote. It is also clear that neither the new "States' Rightists" nor the liberal imperialists are friends of the working class.✪

Bumpy 'Rides' for Immigrant Workers

CHICAGO, IL, Aug. 9 — Today about 2,000 workers rallied to support the Congress Hotel workers' strike and build the Immigrants Freedom Ride organized by the AFL-CIO to demand legalization or amnesty for undocumented immigrant workers. From Sept. 27 to Oct. 4 it will bring participants together in one national campaign. Other demands include drivers' licenses for undocumented workers as well as a fight for the Dream Act, which would give students who graduate from high school with good grades, residency papers for at least six years so they can go to college. The union hacks are using this movement to elect Democrats next year. Also, "legalized" undocumented workers are fertile ground for unionizing, but the union honchos want to use this to win them to pro-boss patriotism.

At the rally we heard speeches from many community organizations, mostly about how bad Bush has been to immigrants, which is true. But they failed to mention that the Clinton era had the most deportations, when the pretext of terrorism didn't exist.

The AFL-CIO and the Democratic Party want us to believe that the problem is Bush, that if we vote Democrat things will be better. They want to hide the fact that the problem is the capitalist system, of which they're an integral part. They want us to forget that Democratic presidents started the Vietnam and Yugoslavia-Kosovo wars.

Being part of the Freedom Ride gives us an opportunity to meet many workers and students who want to make a difference in the struggle to unite immigrant and citizen workers. Many of them understand that fighting for immigrant workers is a fight for all workers. We need to point out that anti-racist multi-racial unity is crucial. Where Latino immigrants make up a quarter of the workforce, the bosses use this to pay ALL

continued on page 4